

## Childcare Licensing Onsite Inspection Process and Protocol: Temporary Process

### Background

Federal CCDF rule requires the Child Care Licensing program to conduct onsite pre-inspections for new child care facilities prior to licensure and unannounced onsite inspections annually thereafter. Montana has received a federal waiver for on-site inspections during the COVID emergency, which expires September 30, 2021. As a result, many health and safety requirements in new childcare facilities that have opened since the COVID emergency started have never been visually checked by a licensing worker. Health and safety requirements in many existing childcare facilities have not been visually checked for nearly 2 years. Child Care Policy (CCL-04) only allows a facility to be provisionally licensed for a total of 6 months. The high number of provisional licenses extending now beyond 6 months creates confusion for partner agencies, providers, and the families they serve. It creates additional work internally and impedes the flow of daily processes.

### Decision

Beginning May 3, 2021 all inspections will be conducted onsite as outlined in process and be conducted as an announced visit. This is temporary protocol to inspect all programs that have not received an annual inspection between March 2020-April 2021 due to COVID-19.

### Process

Onsite inspections for all facility types and inspection types will be conducted.

1. Licensors will contact program to schedule a convenient time (this can be outside of normal operating hours) for an onsite visit.
2. Licensors will provide a list of documents that the provider must have available onsite for the announced visit. If a provider is agreeable to sending documentation electronically prior to the visit, that is allowed and must be received by the licensor no later than 2 days prior to the visit.
  - a. Documentation that must be provided is attached to this memo.

As the required inspections are scheduled, other inspections including complaint inspections, consult visits, and follow-up visits will need to be addressed as well. Licensors will need to plan for these visit types.

Programs may receive an inspection from a licensor outside of their region, dependent on caseload for each licensor and the ability to complete all inspections in a timely manner.

*Inspections shall be conducted in the following order:*

#### **1. New Facilities (March 2020-current):**

- Conduct on-site FFN inspections for providers that started during COVID (have not had an inspection).
- Conduct on site full initial inspection for facilities that started during COVID (have not had a full initial inspection).

- Move from a provisional to a regular license after 90 days if all requirements are met.
- Maintain renewal dates based on 12-month cycle from original start dates so that inspection and license dates will be staggered throughout the year.
- Conduct on site pre-inspection visit for new applications as of May 1, 2021 forward.

*Complete new program inspections as much as possible before moving on to relocation inspections.*

**2. Facilities that Relocate:**

- Conduct announced “relocation inspections” for all facilities that have moved into a new building during the COVID emergency. Perform a check of the new building.
- Expirations dates will not change.

*Complete relocation inspections as much as possible before moving on to renewal inspections.*

**3. Renewing facilities:**

- Conduct announced “renewal inspections” for all facilities, including FFN, that expired during COVID **and** did not have a renewal inspection. This will begin with March 2021 licenses. Follow Key Indicator System (KIS) policy to determine if the facility needs to have a full inspection or a KIS inspection. We will be using the updated KIS tool (updated June 2020).

**Licenser Protocol**

- Conduct only 1 inspection per day to prevent cross contamination
- All inspections are announced
- Can conduct inspections outside of business hours if mutually agreed upon with the program director
- Conduct a daily health self-assessment before going onsite
- Maintain 6-foot social distance protocol.
- Wear N-95 mask
- Wear protective gloves or wash hands before and after inspection
- Utilize hand sanitizer or wash hands, as needed
- Limited touching of materials or furnishings
- Use of personal vehicles will be considered on a case by case basis